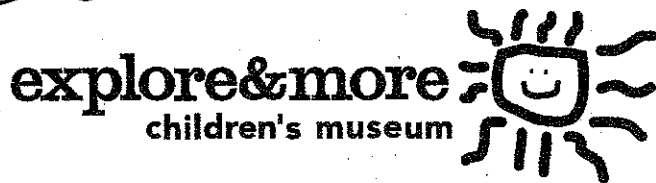


SUSPENSION

300 Glead Avenue
East Aurora, NY 14052
716.655.5131 tel
716.655-5466 fax
www.exploreandmore.org



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

June 15, 2011

PRESIDENT

Peter Bergmann

The Honorable Chris Collins
Erie County Executive
92 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York 14020

VICE PRESIDENT

Gary Sennikoff

Dear County Executive Collins,

TREASURER

Julia Spitz

Explore & More Children's Museum is grateful for the opportunity to apply for funding of capital for our institution. We have appreciated past support from Erie County, which has helped us grow from a small grassroots museum into a creative, high-energy organization that currently earns nearly 70% of its income through admissions, memberships and special events. As it's grown, Explore & More has gained a positive reputation for quality on the local, state and national level.

SECRETARY

Deborah Andrews

For the past decade, Explore & More has evaluated and strategically improved our exhibits, programs and operations. The museum has secured funds to invest in making improvements on a regular basis – and the results are obvious. **Explore & More is succeeding.** The museum is now on pace to set new records for attendance and off-site programming.

MEMBERS AT-LARGE

Peter Anderson
Lisa Chrapowicz
Jarod Haslinger
Matt Murtha
Jenny Pierce
Tim Sanders
Tina Zinter-Chahin

The museum believes in maximizing every opportunity to earn additional income. We know that capital investments in exhibits result in positive returns – increases in admissions and membership (which in turn generate gift shop and birthday party income). We've seen a 12% increase in attendance from 2010 to 2011, thanks in large part to our new exhibit, Make It Go!

Rather than rest on those successes, Explore & More continues to focus on ways to improve and expand. Board, staff and volunteers spent the past six months evaluating and planning for a stronger future – focusing on programs/exhibits, marketing, development, governance, and location.

One of the museum's greatest challenges is our location in East Aurora. We realize that this can be a long drive that many families are not willing to make, and a study by SUNYAB clearly showed that we will need to relocate to expand significantly. While we have focused considerable effort on a long-term relocation plan, we have been strategically increasing offsite programs throughout the County.

SUSPENSION

Explore & More On the Go! Hands-on fun & learning throughout the region

Explore & More On the Go! takes hands-on learning and fun to a new level with exhibit components that can go throughout Western New York and reach thousands of children in their own communities. This is especially important for children that may not have access to transportation to visit the museum (which is currently approximately 22 miles from the City of Buffalo).

The components are designed to be flexible – so museum educators can use them to best meet the needs of our varied audiences.

Imagination Block Kit in a Cart \$5,000

Launched as a pilot program in 2009, Imagination Playground is an indoor/outdoor learning experience for children ages two and up. It has garnered attention in New York City (Seaport), the National Mall and other prominent locations throughout the country, but not in our region (the nearest one is in Pittsburgh). These components are flexible and can be used both on-site and off-site to enhance the visitor experience.

Hands-on Exhibit Panels \$4,500

6 @ \$750 each

The museum is currently designing six educational exhibit panels that can be taken “on the road” or used in our current site. They will be designed to have multiple set-ups to maximize their usefulness.

“On the Go!” Enclosures \$1,200

Creating a sense of space and control (for safety, enjoyment, maintenance and promotions) is essential to offsite program success. Enclosures will be designed to be flexible, easy to take from site to site – and naturally will include a space to promote supporters as well as the museum. Activities will be hands-on exploration of art, physical science, and more.

Offsite Equipment \$1,800

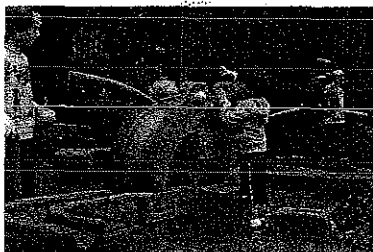
Tables (6 @ \$200 each)	\$600
Chairs (24 @ \$25 each)	\$600
Dollies (2 @ \$300 each)	\$600

Total Cost \$12,500

Request Pending with RBC/USA Foundation \$7,500

Request from Erie County \$5,000

All costs related to implementation are the responsibility of the museum.



where fun & learning play together

EXPLORE & MORE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – Fall 2010 through Summer 2011

- Completed an updated Strategic Plan (Fund for the Arts), including
 - Revised mission statement, vision and values
 - Identification and plans for four Key Strategic Areas over the next three years
 - A two-year plan for Board recruitment
- Strategic Plan Implementation to date
 - Location Committee: Established criteria, developed detailed Architectural Plan, visited multiple sites, currently have narrowed project to three sites. Will make recommendations to Board at December 2011 meeting, with final site selection by January 2012; updating business plan and government relation efforts by year-end.
 - Development Committee: set three-year financial goals for operations and long-range capital goals; began detailed plans for fundraising with foundations, corporations and government grants.
 - Marketing Committee: Reviewed existing marketing; updated tagline, PR, advertising and social media. Prioritized marketing needs over next three years.
 - Governance Committee: Updated all Board documents, developed and began implementation of Board recruitment plan.
- Completed Board and volunteer training and implementation of Year One of the Benevon fundraising program (funded by the East Hill Foundation). Will start Year Two in October 2011.
 - Exceeded financial goal by 36%
 - Presented behind-the-scenes tours to 150+ individuals
 - Expanded volunteer base at the museum and on committees
 - Updated database systems to include improved tracking of donor records and improved communications with museum members and donors
- Opened a new exhibit – Make It Go! – funded by the EastHill Foundation on December 27, 2011.
- Presented 100+ public programs
 - Explore the Arts Family Days (15 programs, funded by the NYS Council on the Arts)
 - Explore Even More Preschool Program (30 programs, sponsored by Fisher-Price)
 - EnCompass Outreach Programs (programs presented free of charge to library branches in low-income communities, funded by General Mills Foundation)
 - Folk Arts programs (two programs, funded by the NYS Council on the Arts)
 - Let's Get Physical (ten programs, sponsored by BlueCross and BlueShield of WNY)
 - Wednesday WOWs (nine programs during July & August, funded by Fisher-Price)
 - Special Celebrations, such as Chinese New Year, Apple Day, Halloween Party (various sponsors)
 - Family Days at Central Wharf (9 programs in 2010; 18 in 2011, revenue-generating)
- Welcomed the most visitors Year to Date (10+% increase over 2010) and nearly doubled offsite programming participants – expected to serve 40,000+ in 2011.
- Began the process of accepting the assets of the Toytown Museum (filing for dissolution).

where fun & learning play together

Explore & More plans to expand these offsite programs in a new direction by adding creative, unique “signature” exhibits that will be both fun and educational. We are asking the County to fund 40% of the costs of these new exhibits for a total investment from Erie County of \$5,000. Details are enclosed. This investment will help Explore & More reach an even greater audience, expand our earned income and potentially lower our operational costs for offsite programming.

Erie County will be investing in capital – exhibits that will serve thousands of visitors over the next five to ten years. And, Erie County will be investing in Explore & More’s long-term sustainability.

Again, thank you for your support and efforts.

Sincerely,

Barbara Park Leggett
Executive Director